



Newsletter From Rep. Matthew J. Shepherd District 97

November 7, 2025

Update on SNAP and Childcare Assistance

As the federal government shutdown continues, the Arkansas Department of Human Services (DHS) is working to manage its far-reaching effects on programs that support families across the state.

During a joint meeting of the House and Senate Public Health, Welfare, and Labor Committees, DHS officials provided updates on how the agency is adapting to reduced federal funding. The department announced that November SNAP benefits are being recalculated using new USDA guidelines. The situation continues to evolve as federal guidelines change. The agency is sharing the latest updates on its website at humanservices.arkansas.gov.

DHS also confirmed that furloughs and county office closures—originally scheduled to begin Friday—will be postponed until at least **November 22** if the shutdown persists. This delay means roughly **1,500 DHS employees** across all 75 counties will continue serving Arkansans for at least a few more weeks. Despite these adjustments, several challenges remain. Funding has been suspended for community partners supported by the **TANF**, **SSBG**, and **CSBG** programs, impacting services provided through the Department of Education, Area Agencies on Aging, Arkansas Rehabilitation Services, the Spinal Cord Commission, and Community Action Agencies. Additional furloughs have been implemented across several DHS divisions, bringing the total to more than 70 employees affected. Meanwhile, the **Transitional Employment Assistance (TEA)** and **Work Pays** programs remain suspended for newly approved beneficiaries.

In other legislative updates, the House and Senate Education Committees received key briefings on early childhood care and the ongoing adequacy study process. The Arkansas Department of Education announced a new reimbursement rate structure for the **School Readiness Assistance Program** and approved changes to expand access and strengthen accountability. These include removing the 72-month limit on assistance and increasing the minimum work or school requirement for parents from 20 to 30 hours per week. Committee members also toured the **White County Central School District** in Judsonia to gain firsthand insight into the needs and successes of Arkansas schools as they continue reviewing education funding.

